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Denominational Data in National Censuses and Sociology

In the period between 1869 and 1949, denominational data of national censuses covered almost the entire population, because the figures reflected formal registration with churches, thus neglecting tendencies of secularization. The greatest change in the period between 1930 and 1949 was that 75 percent of the Jewish population were killed by the Hungarian and German Nazis. The role of the enlightened and educated Lutheran population decreased to 85 per cent of its previous level and a significant decline in the Greek Orthodox population can also be observed in the period. The latter is to be attributed to the fact that belonging to the Greek Orthodox community was a sign of being a „non-ethnic Magyar” of Serbian or Romanian ancestry. The study collects denominational data of State Church Office in the period of the communist regime. Since 1972, several public opinion surveys have helped to understand the main tendencies, such as the growing number of the persons who declared their status of not belonging to any given denomination, and - within the 75 per cent, who have some denominational status - the decline of Lutheran, Jewish, Greek Orthodox minorities, and the fast growth of the category of „other”, practically covering new religious movements, and the Greek Catholic minority, which is overrepresented in the rural population. The denominational data of the censuses of 2001 and 2011 are very contradictory because a growing percentage of population has refused to answer the question on their belonging to a religious denomination/being out of denomination status.